MYTHBUSTING THE AWDRY EXTRAVAGANZA 2025 LORE

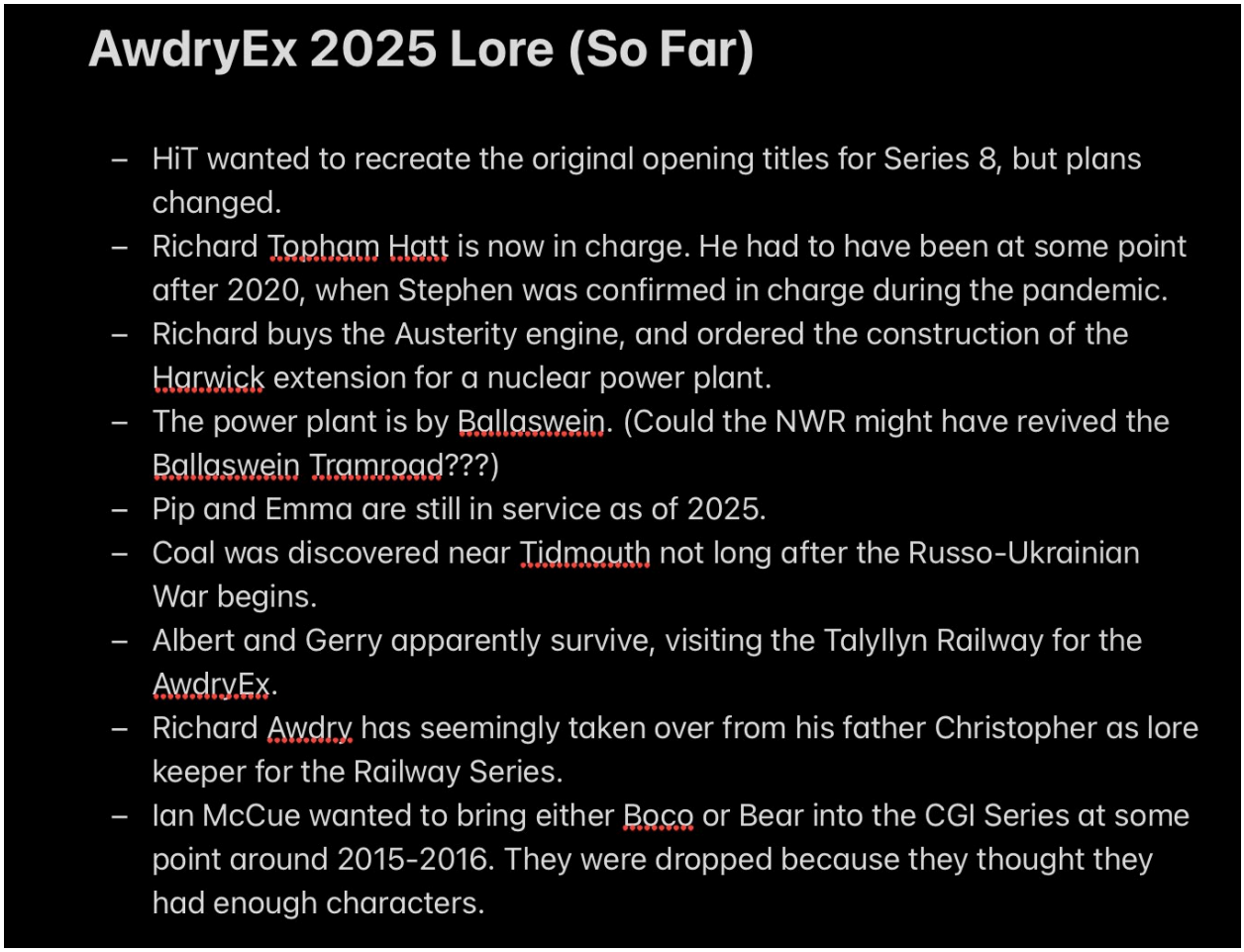
By Nicholas Webster

Dear friends,

The latest Awdry Extravaganza as of 2025, has proven to be the biggest and best one yet! The effort and dedication of the volunteers from the Talyllyn Railway have done well to keep the works of Wilbert Awdry and the magic of Sodor alive! So many have turned out for the event, as well as several visitors from Sodor itself, both old and new! Of course, for us history fans, the new lectures have proved both entertaining and enlightening on the archives of Sodor, but, we have been delighted to find out some new information as to what Sodor has been up to since the last Railway Series publication in 2011! But, of course, we must remember to hear everything with a shaker of salt, and not be so quick to rush to put out information, as it passes from the word of mouth to mouth, some can get rather befuddled and lead to several misleads which can be shared by the fandom as the word of truth! So I write this document to settle the claims we've heard from the Awdry Extravaganza, and hope this clears up some things we've heard to prevent any false rumors from spreading further. I hope you will find this information useful, and hope you enjoy what I have written.

The author

We must first begin with this list of statements I have previously published on my Twitter…

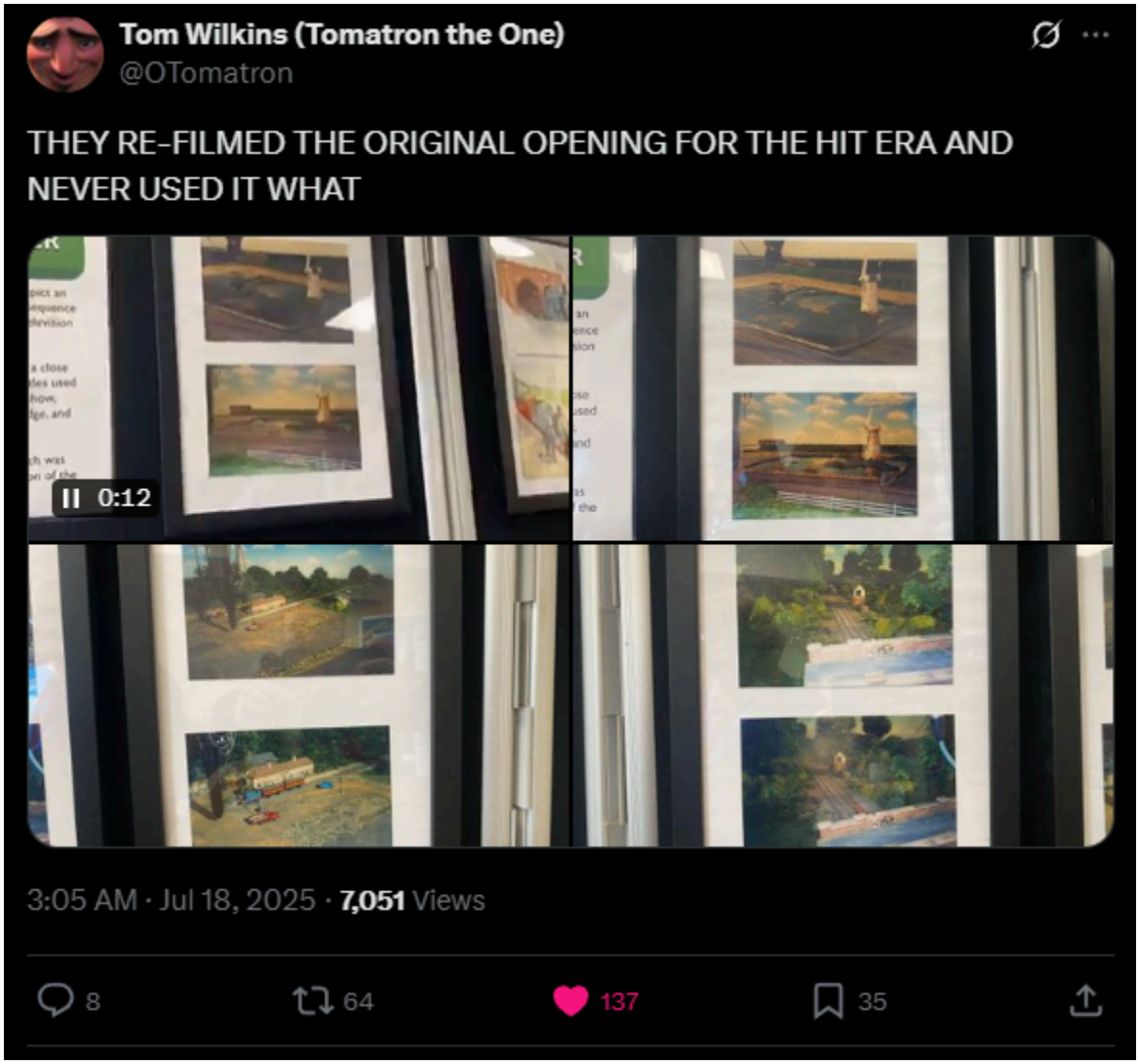

AwdryEx 2025 Lore (So Far)
– HiT wanted to recreate the original opening titles for Series 8, but plans changed.
– Richard Topham Hatt is now in charge. He had to have been at some point after 2020, when Stephen was confirmed in charge during the pandemic.
– Richard buys the Austerity engine, and ordered the construction of the Harwick extension for a nuclear power plant.
– The power plant is by Ballaswein. (Could the NWR might have revived the Ballaswein Tramroad???)
– Pip and Emma are still in service as of 2025.
– Coal was discovered near Tidmouth not long after the Russo-Ukrainian War begins.
– Albert and Gerry apparently survive, visiting the Talyllyn Railway for the AwdryEx.
– Richard Awdry has seemingly taken over from his father Christopher as lore keeper for the Railway Series.
– Ian McCue wanted to bring either Boco or Bear into the CGI Series at some point around 2015-2016. They were dropped because they thought they had enough characters.

Most of this info has been passed around through either my friends or various other people I've seen post on either Twitter or some Discord groups. I will provide sources as I go along, and make sure to either confirm or bust the claims I have read here. So in the style of Jamie and Adam from "Mythbusters," I shall go through each fact, provide the source if I still have it, find evidence to quote, and set the record if it's either confirmed, plausible or busted!

Granted I might provide some of my own headcanon to fill in some blanks on the lore and try and explain things, which I will highlight in red with a warning, so make of that as you will!

Anyways, let's begin with the first bit!

Myth: HiT wanted to recreate the original opening titles for Series 8, but plans changed.

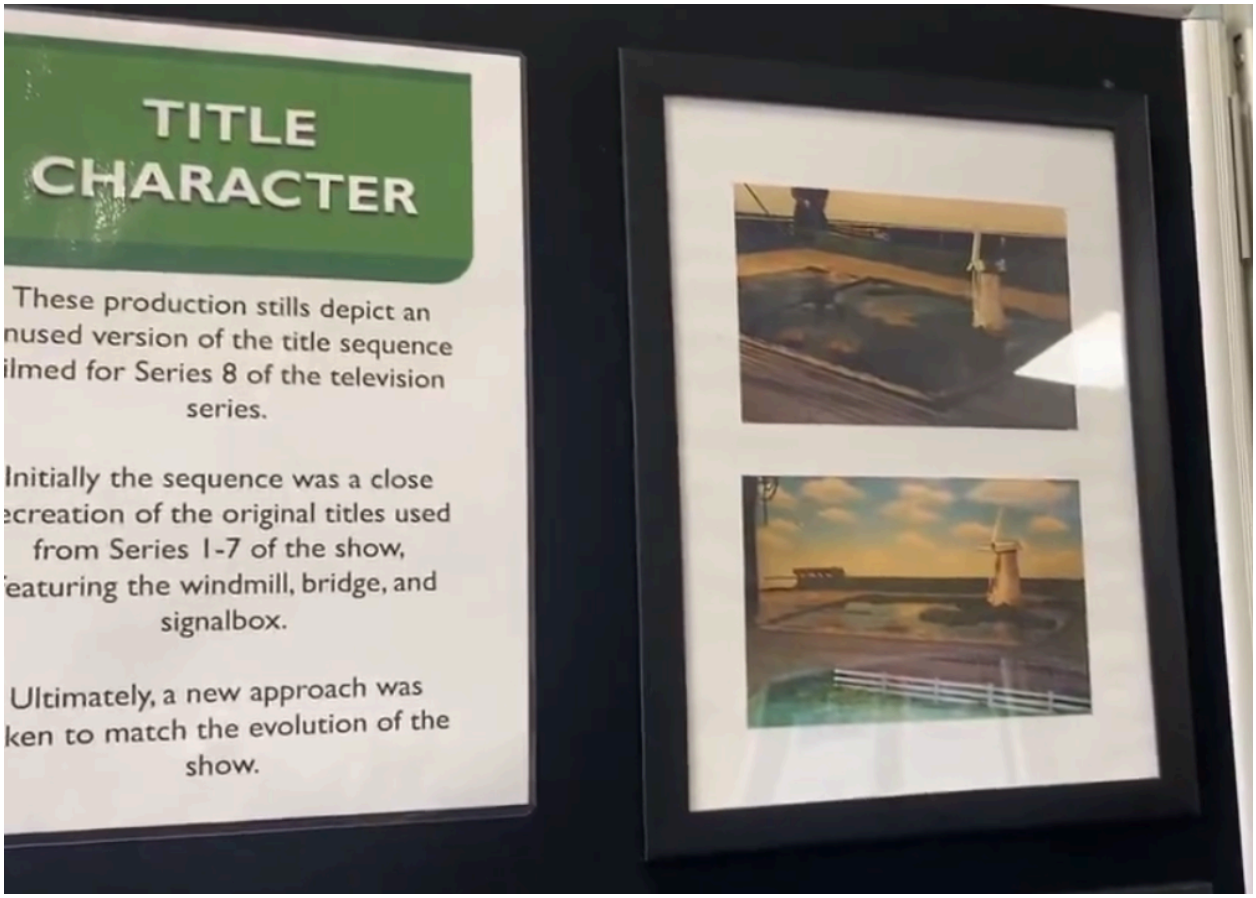


https://x.com/OTomatron/status/1946149258651992530

A display at the Awdry Extravaganza at Tywyn showed HiT Entertainment originally had plans to recreate the original opening sequence for Thomas & Friends when they were filming Series 8. Different clips show a recreated windmill run-by set, a pass under the bridge with the boy, and a stop or passby at Ffarquhar Station. But for one reason or another, they did not use the original sequence, and opted to use a new, different style for their reboot of the TV show.

However, some clips may have been filmed, particularly the one of Thomas passing through Ffarquhar Station with Annie and Clarabel, which was seen in a music video. The original clip of the pass under the bridge remained at the same angle, but was refilmed with a pan underneath the bridge as

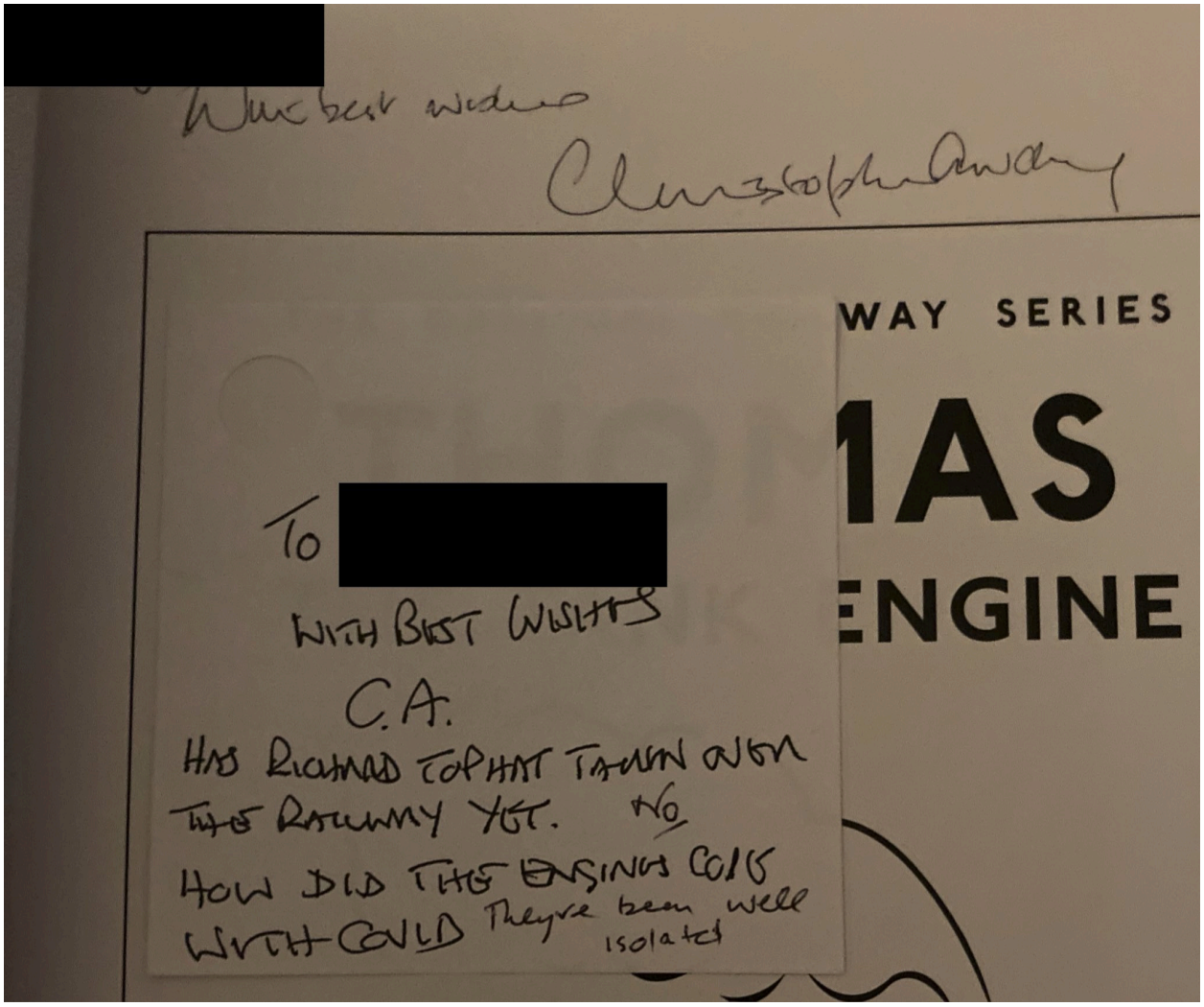
Thomas passed by.


TITLE CHARACTER
These production stills depict an nused version of the title sequence ilmed for Series 8 of the television series.
Initially the sequence was a close ecreation of the original titles used from Series 1-7 of the show, eaturing the windmill, bridge, and signalbox.
Ultimately, a new approach was ken to match the evolution of the show.

Status: ***Confirmed.***

Myth: Richard Topham Hatt is now in charge.

This comes from the new “Railways of Sodor” lecture read by both Richard Awdry and Tim Dunn. Previously, Christopher Awdry confirmed that during the 2020 COViD pandemic that Stephen Hatt was still in charge, according to a signing by him to a fan for his copy of “The New Collection.” This was signed in December 2021.



https://x.com/LostEngines/status/1468585297667493888

Richard Awdry has emphasized that Richard Hatt is now in charge, and is not only in charge of the railway, but an active advisor of the Sodor Industrial Relations Service (or SIRS). Richard is also actively involved with the politics on the island. It is also stated he is the current "Sir Topham Hatt IV", which means he inherited the baronetcy from his father, but this can only be done if the former holder of the title has passed on. Stephen has likely died since 2021, at or over the age of 80. Richard would be over 50 when appointed as the new Fat Controller.

Status: *Confirmed.*

Myth: Richard bought the Austerity engine, and ordered the construction of the Harwick extension for a nuclear power plant.

The Railway of Sodor lecture, "Sodor in 2025," has confirmed the Harwick extension is at last a thing. The branch has been made to enable the construction of a small modular nuclear power plant at Harwick, as the Sudrian government, as well as SIRS, was not interested in developing the road infrastructure leading up to Harwick. Uranium from Toryreck is sourced for the Harwick plant, and waste trains regularly take the excess to Sellafield. Sodor as a result, is a net exporter of clean energy to the Mainland, thanks to the Harwick plant, and several wind farms on the north-west corner of the island, both on and off-shore. *(Railways of Sodor 2025, timestamp 1:31:32)*

Richard Awdry confirms that Stephen bought the Austerity engine shortly after Wilbert's trial in 1993 in mind for the Harwick extension, although this was not common knowledge at the time. *(Railways of Sodor 2025, timestamp 1:32:30)* When Awdry asked Hatt about it, his screen either froze or completely ignored his questions, so Awdry stopped asking! The myth however circulated that Richard was the one who bought the Austerity engine shortly after his appointment sometime after 2021! So whilst most of this was true, the dates were out of whack!

Status: *Semi-busted!*

Myth: The power plant is by Ballaswein, which means the NWR might have revived the Ballaswein Tramroad.

Conflicting reports before the lecture came out, stated the new power station was likely either at Ballaswein or Droghan-y-Claghan. Either way, this would've meant a possible revival of either the Cronk & Harwick railway (taken up during WW2), or the Ballaswein Tramway (abandoned at some point prior to 1958).

However, the "Railways of Sodor" lecture did indeed confirm the power station is at Droghan-y-Claghan (timestamp 1:31:32). ***This likely means a significant portion of the Cronk & Harwick railway has been rebuilt by the NWR to connect to the site of the power plant. The nuclear plant being inland means it'd be the only one aside from the Trawsfynydd power station in Wales that's inland. Nuclear power plants need an active source of water to keep the machinery cool. Either by the sea or forming a reservoir from a nearby water source such as the river. It's very possible the Hawin Oorye was dammed up to provide the water needed for the Harwick power plant. How deep this would be is questionable, but it's possible this would turn Cregwir into either a beachside resort or fish food!***

Status: *Busted!*

Myth: Pip and Emma are still in service as of 2025.

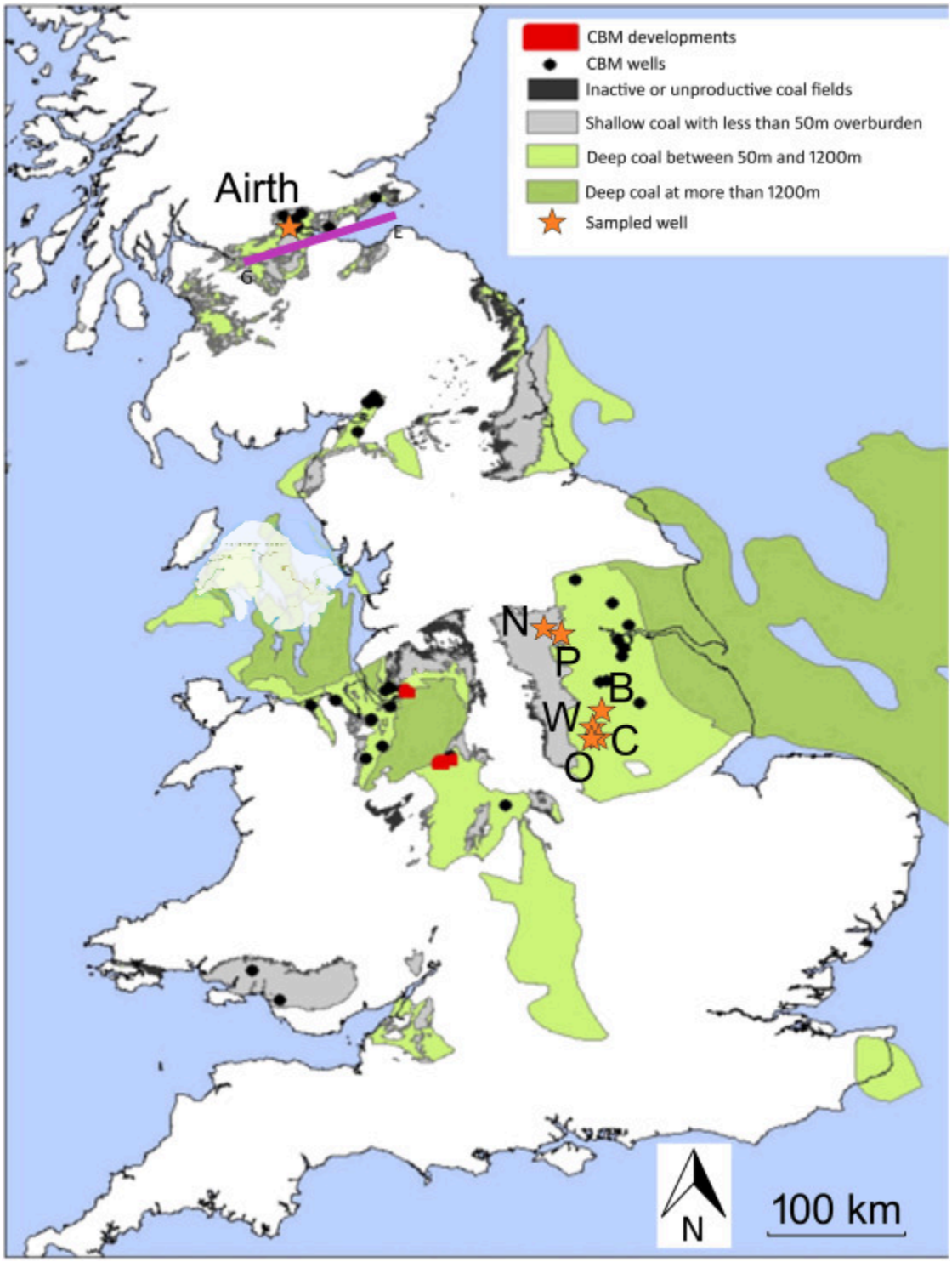
Richard Hatt does indeed say in the Railways of Sodor 2025 lecture (timestamp 1:30:41), that Pip and Emma are still indeed in service. They run twice-daily services between Tidmouth and London, and are proud to be among the last remaining HST units running on the Mainland.

Status: *Confirmed.*

Myth: Coal was discovered near Tidmouth not long after the Russo-Ukrainian War began.

Timestamp 1:33:06 of the "Railways of Sodor" lecture does indeed confirm Sodor does indeed have coal deposits, as such that exist in real life where the island would be. Sodor never had easy access to coal, but with mainland mines closing and the Russo-Ukranian war caused a serious problem for the railways. ***The real-life coal deposits are within 50 to 1200 meters below the ground. If any coal mines were dug on Sodor prior, this would mean they'd need to dig some deep underground inclines in order for trucks to be loaded with coal at the sources. This could mean "Put Upon Percy!" might have some***

merit to it!



A hunch that turned into a study commissioned by the University of Sodor in collaboration with Sir Topham Hatt, in sync with the Whitehaven colliery project in 2010, discovered the Whitehaven coal veins extended under the Irish Sea to the northern tip of Sodor's coastline. A reasonable amount of bituminous steam coal, which could be dug up for Sodor's own railways, and possibly exported to various

heritage railways across the Mainland, along with stocks of coking coal that forms a useful export during the UK's transition from traditional steel-making, to more modern methods such as that utilized by Port Talbot. ***Could A.W. Dry perhaps use this new method too if still around and making steel for ships?***

Rumors of industrial lubbering and lobbying and interference in the Whitehaven project have been strongly denied by the SIRS. So an exact location of coal mining at Tidmouth has not actually been said, nor a date of a mine dug, ***but it's very possible there could be some coal waiting there to be discovered that could easily be mined!***

Status: *Busted!*

Myth: Albert and Gerry apparently survive, visiting the Talyllyn Railway for the AwdryEx.

On Saturday, two surprise visitors were shown at the Awdry Extravaganza. Gerry and Albert (masqueraded by Dolgoch and Talyllyn respectively) have double-headed to pull Mid Sodor heritage trains, with Mabel (a Skarloey Railway coach) and one of the surviving Mid Sodor saloon coaches ***(likely the one seen in Very Old Engines, "Duck & Dukes")***

https://x.com/rhino_on_rails/status/1947378336499703833

Tim Dunn and Max (Terrier55Stepney) have noted that Gerry and Albert pose similarities to Talyllyn and Dolgoch, but neither confirm nor deny they actually are twins to Skarloey and Rheneas, both built by Fletcher Jennings. However, it does seem to imply both are indeed the original characters that first originated from the Mid Sodor Railway, as pictured on Wilbert's layout, with Albert being painted blue to match Talyllyn ***(or perhaps in the RWS universe, he gained a blue livery similar to Falcon?)***. The reason why they are portrayed as Talyllyn & Dolgoch, is because Albert and Gerry's exact basis are unknown, and no engines could be found for the 2'3" gauge, or 1'11"/2' gauge to match them.

5
ALBERT
© The Awdry Family

Fans have argued either Albert and Gerry are indeed the same original characters from Duke's old railways, or it's either Talyllyn & Dolgoch/Skarloey & Rheneas simply cosplaying as them, as the latter old twin's faces have been modelled to represent Albert and Gerry. Regardless, nothing was confirmed nor denied by either Tim nor Max, nor even Richard himself, so this myth is best left to personal interpretation of the fans by their Awdryvision goggles! But if the original characters, they'd indeed appear as Wilbert intended them to be! As for the explanation as to why they looked so similar to Talyllyn and Dolgoch, either you can interpret them acting as "mall Santas," same as the other engines, or perhaps there's more to these little engines than meets the eye!

Status: *Plausible.*

Myth: Richard Awdry has seemingly taken over from his father Christopher as lore keeper for the Railway Series.

Richard Awdry has indeed said in the lecture (Railways of Sodor, timestamp 1:28:38), that despite he would not continue the stories from his father for a variety of reasons, he has still been able to provide us with a wealth of knowledge about what Sodor's been up to since the last Railway Series story was published in 2011! He confirms Richard Hatt is now indeed the current Fat Controller, and advisor to the Sodor Industrial Relations Service (SIRS). Real-world problems still affect Sodor as does elsewhere and balances must be made. (timestamp 1:29:11) Richard Hatt himself is also actively involved in Sodor's politics. Both Richards remain in regular correspondence.

Richard Awdry has also elaborated that the Fat Controller's engines have remained in service, and have since been upgraded with the latest modern steam locomotive technology, being so subtle a casual traveller wouldn't notice the details. (timestamp 1:30:14) A university has also been built on Sodor in the late 90's, with focus on engineering and ecology. Engineers of both youth and experience have passed through the works, helping to improve Sodor's steam engine technology.

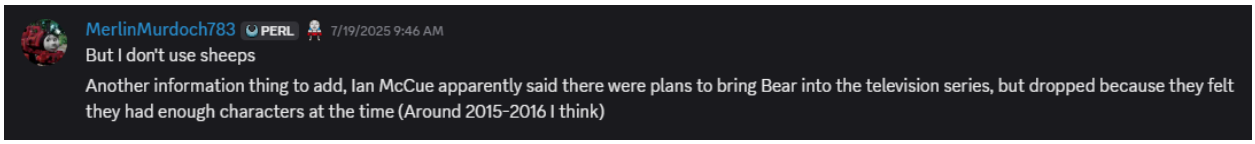
Not much cross-traffic exists from Sodor anymore, and due to the lack of facilities at Barrow-in-Furness, the NWR has abandoned its terminus and interchange with the Other Railway in favor of Vicarstown. (timestamp 1:30:25) Excursion traffic is relatively frequent, with Flying Scotsman making regular visits to Sodor to see his "little brother," Gordon, in recent years. (timestamp 1:30:51) ***("Little brother" is RWS canon now????) This was likely a tongue-in-cheek reference to the fact that you can never see Sodor trains coming in and out of Barrow. But with the NWR abandoning its facilities at Barrow and moving to Vicarstown, this means the original turntable once located at Vicarstown before the move to Barrow in 1927-28 was likely returned to Sudrian soil! This could also explain why Rosie is canonically station pilot at Vicarstown in the CGI series.*** Other railway trains now make their way across the Vicarstown Bridge to transfer Sodor's passengers with dreary BR Class 195 units to Manchester and so forth.

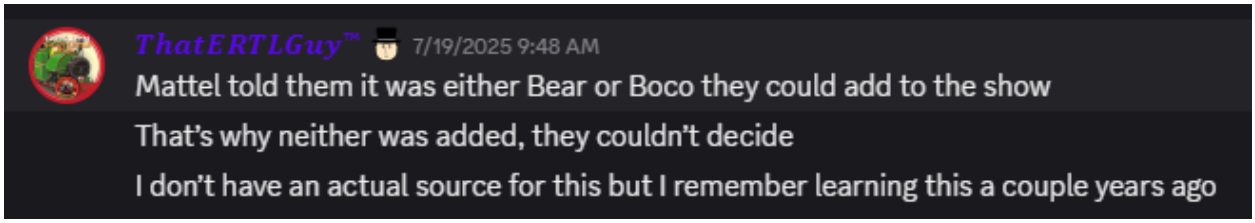
(timestamp 1:31:02) Tidmouth's port has also been expanded to allow container traffic from overflows of ships looking to avoid busy ports on the mainland. Henry and James share in the container traffic, with BR Class 66's regularly visiting Sodor.

Status: *Confirmed.*

Myth: Ian McCue wanted to bring either Boco or Bear into the TV Series at some point around 2015-2016. They were dropped because HiT thought they had enough characters.

I heard this post in a Discord group, "North Western Lounge," which I thought was ThatERTLGuy, but I couldn't find the post again. However, I did find another post from him saying Mattel seemingly told Ian McCue that they could add either Bear or BoCo to the show. They couldn't decide which and neither returned. There was also this post from MerlinMurdoch783, which I might have mixed up with memory seeing ThatERTLGuy's comment!


MerlinMurdoch783
PERL
7/19/2025 9:46 AM
But I don't use sheeps
Another information thing to add, Ian McCue apparently said there were plans to bring Bear into the television series, but dropped because they felt they had enough characters at the time (Around 2015-2016 I think)

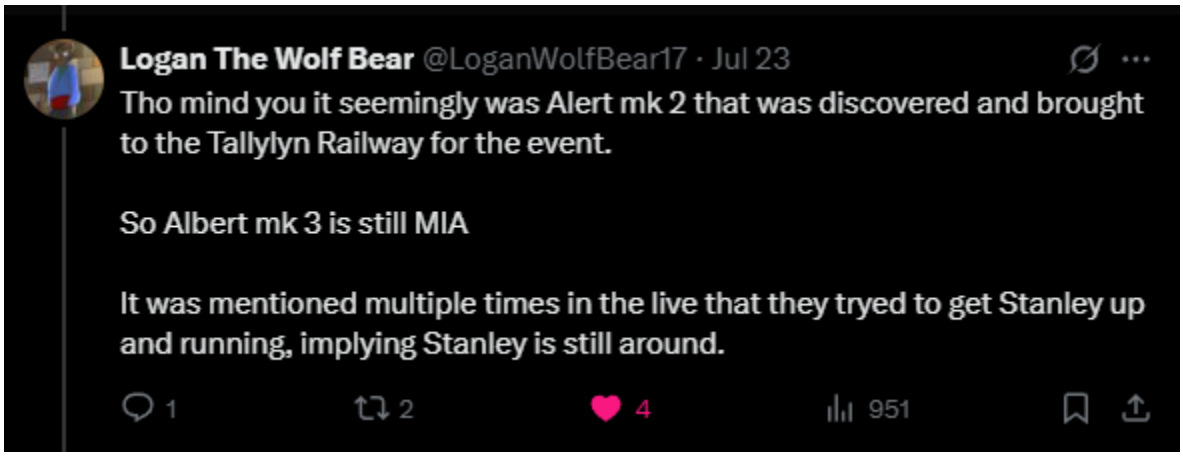

ThatERTLGuy™
7/19/2025 9:48 AM
Mattel told them it was either Bear or Boco they could add to the show
That's why neither was added, they couldn't decide
I don't have an actual source for this but I remember learning this a couple years ago

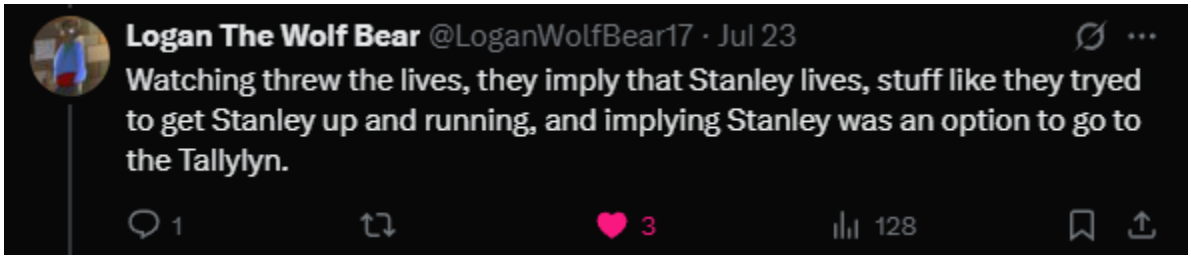
Apparently, a poll was also held on Sodor Island Forums before the making of Season 20, to see which characters fans wanted most to see return to the Television Series. Popular entries included Bear, Boco, Duke and the Small Railway Engines. Eventually, Mattel animated the Small Railway Engines for Season 20, as well as for their new special, "Sodor's Legend of the Lost Treasure." Some fans have also denied any rumors that there was ever any consideration to bring either Boco or Bear into the CGI Series.

Status: *Busted!*

Myth: Stanley survives and after restoration to working order, was due to visit the Talyllyn for the AwdryEx

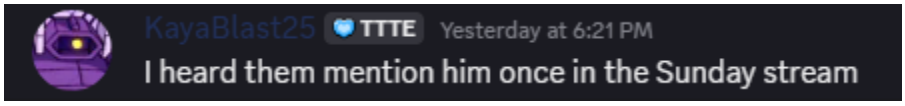
This myth was brought forward to me by my friend Logan, saying he heard in one of the livestreams that Stanley was meant to visit the Awdry Extravaganza, but wasn't able to steam properly ***(likely corresponding with real-life problems the WHR 590 replica was facing at the time!)***, and thus wasn't able to attend the event. ***Likely being supplemented by Albert and Gerry!***


Logan The Wolf Bear @LoganWolfBear17 · Jul 23
Tho mind you it seemingly was Alert mk 2 that was discovered and brought to the Tallylyn Railway for the event.
So Albert mk 3 is still MIA
It was mentioned multiple times in the live that they tryed to get Stanley up and running, implying Stanley is still around.
1
2
4
951

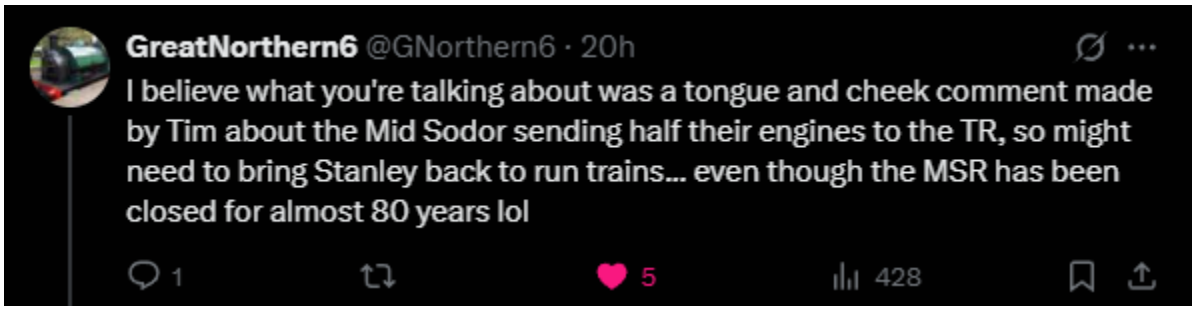

Logan The Wolf Bear @LoganWolfBear17 · Jul 23
Watching threw the lives, they imply that Stanley lives, stuff like they tryed to get Stanley up and running, and implying Stanley was an option to go to the Tallylyn.
1
3
128

https://x.com/LoganWolfBear17/status/1948164853765382624

As to which stream this was said in is as of now, unclear, though I've seen KayaBlast25 mention on the NWR Crew Break room it might have been in the Sunday livestream.



GreatNorthern6 has stated he believes Tim Dunn joked that the MSR sent half their engines to the Talyllyn and might need to bring Stanley back to run trains according to this tweet.


GreatNorthern6 @GNorthern6 · 20h
I believe what you're talking about was a tongue and cheek comment made by Tim about the Mid Sodor sending half their engines to the TR, so might need to bring Stanley back to run trains... even though the MSR has been closed for almost 80 years lol
1
5
428

https://x.com/GNorthern6/status/1948319444821758410

The Sunday livestream from the Awdry Extravaganza revealed at timestamp 57:25, that Max and Tim were commenting that the Mid Sodor Railway sent most of its engines to the Extravaganza, meaning they've had to entirely rely on horse and gravity trains in order to keep things moving! The railway allegedly even considered bringing Stanley back into action to pull trains. There was also something said

about Smudger, but I couldn't make out what they said. ***This may imply the MSR could be working into the modern day, possibly rebuilt after 1987!*** However, Luke Ryan has posted this tweet in response to the info about Stanley.

https://x.com/Expl_Cookie/status/1948300054306890076

So from what it seems at the moment, Logan's comments about Stanley potentially surviving nor the MSR existing today sadly seem to be a joke. ***However, this does not mean Stanley might actually still survive, and there's a fair chance of him still existing too!***

Refer to the way Wilbert modelled Stanley as a pumping engine on his layout of the Mid Sodor Railway. Contrary to popular belief, Stanley was never placed *inside* the mine itself, but is pictured to be enclosed within a brick house built right by the lineside at the mouth of the mine. He broke down and the mine was flooded beyond rescue. ***It'd be awfully difficult to take him out for scrap, as you'd have to either knock down the pump house right over him, and remove Stanley out of the rubble, or cut him up on site. That'd involve bringing suitable equipment, including a gas axe up the mountain by train or lorry, loading the bits and hauling them away.***

The MSR seemingly left almost everything in place. A sale was done in 1947, selling off rolling stock such as Cora (Reading Between the Lines), however, the entire railway was left as was to return to nature. ***Likely as with the Ffestiniog, the Mid Sodor was formed from an Act of Parliament, which gave***

no such provisions as how to legally abandon your railway and sell it off for scrap! Stanley likely would've remained in place, at least until Skarloey Railway trackgangs found him after taking up the salvageable rails between Peel Godred and Cas-ny-Hawin in 1952 to 53 (Narrow Gauge Rails of Sodor)***. However, there's still a chance Stanley could've still been cut up on-site, as his copper firebox would've certainly been worth some scrap value in the postwar economy. But nothing is official stating whether Stanley was scrapped, survived or rebuilt into an engine. Make of what I said as you will.***

Status: *Busted?*

Myth: Duke had hornets in his firebox when buried in his shed for 20 years.

Max (Terrier55Stepney) made a comment about Duke saying he had hornets nested in his firebox when the Fat and Thin clergymen found him, likely a reference to Duke's inspiration, the "Coronel Church" was found abandoned in the Brazilian rainforest with hornets also nested in its firebox. (Awdry Extravaganza 2025 Saturday livestream, timestamp 47:45)

Whilst never explicitly said in canon Duke also had hornets in his firebox, this was likely made as a joke in reference to Coronel Church. ***However, if you want to accept this into your headcanon, my friend TWMallard38 has come up with a plausible theory as to how hornets got into Duke's firebox despite the shed being buried under soil and rocks.***

"we know Duke was put into a shed, and that shed was buried. They did not happen together, so whos to say the hornets didn't invade the shed lets say 1951"

"they eventually move on, shed gets buried lets say 1956. explains nest + lack of hornets" -TWMallard38

So he implies the burial of Duke's shed was more gradual, allowing enough time for hornets to get in, nest in Duke's firebox, and get buried underground with him in the shed. Take it as you will, nothing that goes on at the Awdry Extravaganza is explicitly canon, such as Ada retaining her original open coach form whereas Mabel (and presumably Jane) have since been rebuilt with roofs and doors to match their Talyllyn counterparts. Everything said and done at the lecture is conjecture, unless confirmed by a source such as Richard Awdry himself to be explicitly canon to the Railway Series!

Status: *Plausible.*

THE END.